



OFFICIAL NEWS RELEASE

MISSISSIPPI FORESTRY COMMISSION
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Morgan Named Head of the Mississippi Forestry Commission

Jackson, Miss.—Charlie W. Morgan of Canton, Mississippi, has been selected to serve as State Forester of the Mississippi Forestry Commission, a service agency providing wildfire protection and forest management assistance on private and state-owned forestland. Morgan's employment with the Forestry Commission begins June 1, 2006.

"I'm very excited to be part of such an important agency to the state of Mississippi," said Morgan. "Timber and the forest-related natural resources are very important to the state's economy and the quality of life of Mississippians. The Mississippi Forestry Commission plays a vital role in the protection and management of this valuable resource."

A veteran businessman and no stranger to forestry, Morgan has been employed by International Paper for 32 years. Advancing through positions of increasing responsibility in areas of forest management, harvesting, and fiber procurement, Morgan eventually became manager of acquisition and harvesting of International Paper's West Region. His area of responsibility spans over International Paper-owned land in Arkansas, Louisiana, Missouri, Oklahoma, and Texas. Morgan is a graduate of Mississippi State University, receiving a BS degree in Forest Management in 1973.

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Morgan is looking forward to his new role as the executive director, or State Forester, of the Mississippi Forestry Commission. The Forestry Commission is a state agency having over 500 employees and a budget of \$27 million.

The Forestry Commission started a process of reorganization in 2005, with the goal of improving operational and management efficiency with a smaller budget and fewer employees. Morgan believes his background in business and natural resource management helped him get the job. “I look forward to continuing the efforts made in the reorganization of the agency. I believe that the Forestry Commission is developing into an agency in which the landowners and residents of the state, as well as the employees, can all be proud to call their own,” said Morgan.

The position of State Forester reports directly to the Forestry Commission’s governing board of nine governor-appointed commissioners, who are also responsible for hiring the State Forester. The selection of Charlie W. Morgan for the position of State Forester was made following an active search period of several months, which began in 2005 following the retirement of James L. Sledge, Jr. Sledge served as State Forester for 14 years, becoming the longest-serving State Forester in the agency’s 79-year history.

Everard G. Baker has been serving as acting/interim State Forester during the past year. Baker will resume his former position as Assistant State Forester. Baker will also serve as the director of the Forestry Commission’s Division of Law Enforcement, which investigates violations of the state’s woods arson and other wildfire laws.

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